

Text obtained from the permanent archives at www.state.gov

June 5, 2002

Fact Sheet on the Moscow Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions

On May 24, President George W. Bush and President Vladimir Putin signed the Moscow Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions. Under this Treaty, the United States and Russia will reduce their strategic nuclear warheads to a level of 1700-2200 by December 31, 2012, a level nearly two-thirds below current levels.

This new, legally-binding Treaty codifies the deep reductions announced by President Bush during the November 2001 Washington/Crawford Summit and by President Putin at that summit and one month later. The two Presidents agreed on the need for a legally binding document that would outlast both of their presidencies, to provide openness and predictability over the longer term in the U.S.-Russian strategic relationship. At the same time, reflecting the mutual trust in this relationship, the Treaty affords flexibility to each Party to meet unforeseen future contingencies.

The Treaty is part of the new strategic framework that the United States and Russia have established. The Joint Declaration on the New Strategic Relationship, also issued in Moscow on May 24, records mutual commitments to a broad array of cooperative efforts in political, economic, and security areas. It marks a new era in our bilateral relationship.

Treaty Provisions

The Treaty requires each country to reduce and limit its strategic nuclear warheads to 1700-2200 by December 31, 2012. Each side may determine for itself the composition and structure of its strategic forces consistent with this limit.

Both the United States and Russia intend to reduce their strategic offensive forces to the lowest possible levels, consistent with their national security requirements and alliance obligations, and reflecting the new nature of their strategic relations. The U.S. intends to reduce its operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads to 1700-2200, as President Bush announced on November 13, 2001. The United States considers operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads to be reentry vehicles on ICBMs in their launchers, reentry vehicles on SLBMs in their launchers onboard submarines, and nuclear armaments located at heavy bomber bases. In addition, there will be some spares stored at heavy bomber bases.

A Bilateral Implementation Commission will meet at least twice a year to discuss issues related to implementation of the Treaty.

Ratification Process

The Treaty will be transmitted to the United States Senate for its advice and consent to ratification; in Russia, the two Chambers of the Federal Assembly must approve a bill on its ratification. Assuming positive action by the legislatures of both countries, the United States and Russia will exchange instruments of ratification and the Treaty will enter into force. It will remain in force until December 31, 2012, and may be extended or replaced with a subsequent agreement.

Relationship to START

The five-Party Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) of 1991 continues in force unchanged. (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine and the United States are Parties to START.) START's comprehensive verification regime will provide the foundation for providing confidence, transparency and predictability in further strategic reductions. As noted in the Joint Declaration on the New Strategic Relationship also issued in Moscow on May 24, supplementary measures, including transparency measures, may be agreed in the future. The United States and Russia will establish a Consultative Group for Strategic Security to be chaired by Foreign and Defense Ministers. This group will be the principal mechanism through which the sides strengthen mutual confidence, expand transparency, share information and plans, and discuss strategic issues of mutual interest.

The 1993 START II Treaty never entered into force because of the long delay in Russian ratification and the fact that Russia conditioned its ratification of START II on preservation of the ABM Treaty. The new Moscow Treaty moves us beyond START II, both in reductions to even lower levels of operationally deployed warheads and in our relationship with Russia.

U.S. Reduction Plans

As outlined in the Department of Defense's Nuclear Posture Review submitted to Congress in January of this year, the United States plans to deactivate all 50 of its ten-warhead Peacekeeper ICBMs and remove four Trident submarines from strategic service. Additional steps to reduce the number of U.S. operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads to the 1700-2200 level, including missile downloading and lowering the number of operationally deployed weapons at heavy bomber bases, will be decided subsequently.

Some of the warheads removed from deployed status will be used as spares, some will be stored, and some will be destroyed. The U.S. will continue to deploy land-, sea- and air-based strategic forces as part of one element of the New Triad described in the Nuclear Posture Review Report to Congress.